

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AT S.THOMAS' COLLEGE **GURUTALAWA- THE FUTURE**

- A. Some time ago a Committee led by Mr.Sarath Suraweera of the Police, (a friend, contemporary and a Member of the 62 Group) worked towards the construction of the ACM Laffir Sports Pavillion and Stadium Project. The project did not get off the ground due to lack of support from the Board of Governors and the OBA itself, due to various maneuvers of interested parties and for various extraneous reasons which did not have much to do with the interests of College. The project was hence abandoned. Today the College grounds are used by College with the "leave and license" of the villagers of Guru. Now it has come to that, I suppose we should be thankful to them for permitting us to use our own grounds. The Turf Wicket which was also put in place some years ago and about which there was so much of acrimony and division within the OBA also happens to be on the same grounds.

It is strange that generally it appears that an Ex-Co gets the idea, once installed, that they and only they run the show, and they must forget the membership that elected it to office for one year. Some think re-election is their divine right and want to entrench themselves in positions for years. We experienced something like this in 1993/94 from a section of Old Boys who were really running the show, perhaps the "kitchen cabinet". We experienced this same situation from February 2001 till March 2002. Not a telephone call, not a post card, not a letter, not an invitation to come for a discussion and place our proposals before the Ex-Co. All this despite our having utilized our resources (personnel and financial) in order to improve the Secretarial work of the OBA and thereby revive, rebuild and strengthen the OBA before starting on College, a couple of kilos of correspondence without any response whatsoever. The "kitchen cabinet" had the audacity to tell us to our face on 02.03.2002

- a) "Whether the Vice President or Secretary of the OBA should or should not reply your letters is something we decide. We tell them to reply or not, what to say and what not to say" and
- b) "whether there should be any election or not is something we decide and it is we who tell the Vice President and others to contest or not to"

Such was their cantankerous behaviour. They were the financiers of the Ex-Co that was replaced. Such people cannot be reformed. They are beyond that. Now that an Ex-Co of our choice has replaced the previous set, there is an organised boycott, sabotage and desire to create problems for the current Ex-Co. It has been clear to us for quite sometime how the Headmaster is trying to frustrate the current Ex-Co and indulge in behaviour and conduct "unbecoming" of the Headmaster of STCG. Whilst we all accept his nature which we cannot change and whilst we all accept the fact that we have to learn to work with him, a time may come when patience will run out and some may refuse to work with him.

Perhaps he is trying his best at the instance of his “friends” who were responsible for his installation in office and to whom he owes some gratitude therefor to bait us. This will not augur well for the current Ex-Co, the OBA and College. The only people to benefit or who will be glad will be the former Ex-Co and the ousted “kitchen cabinet”. We can feel and sense this undercurrent. All of these activities are known. Individuals are identified. Some very Senior and founder members. That is very sad. Mr.B A Mahipala, Chairman of BAM Group of Companies, a contemporary of ours, in College who accepted my invitation to attend the AGM and help us to put in a different team saw for himself the senior dorms and at our first gathering immediately after the AGM on March 09,2002 at the Golf Club undertook to refurbish the entire senior dorms putting in a completely new roof. The Head Master had made representations in regard to this to the Board of Governors who had grudgingly indicated that they will be able to give the funds to repair the roof of one dorm and that the balance could be done in stages over one year or so. The Board also did not have in their Current Account Rs.190,000/- or so of Donations made by Guru Old Boys direct to it to obtain Tax Relief. They have to uplift a Deposit. The relevant Minutes on this subject show for how long payment has been delayed despite our representative being on the Board. Mr.Duleep Kumar and Mr.Bandula Wanigasekera have since March been working on it. So how can the Board release monies to repair the dorms at Guru. My friend completed the entire senior dorms after relocating the boarders of the 4 Senior Dorms elsewhere on the campus. The job was completed in 2 months and by the time we went on June 15 for the Ex-Co meeting to Guru the students were in occupation of the dorms. The amount expended, I am told, exceeded Rs.1.5 Million. No allegations were cast on any person in College and the Job was completed. My friend has withdrawn unobtrusively. He had previously declined to be co-opted to the Ex-Co. Another friend, Mr.Anil Algama has undertaken the re-organisation of the Farm. He was formerly the chairman of the NLDB. He too declined to be co-opted to the Ex-Co. Acceptance of advise given on a first visit is already showing good results. These friends however are actively involved in making sure the Ex-Co keeps on course. They are all very concerned about development work of College. They are in touch with me and with one another and we discuss these matters and meet very regularly in one of our homes to thrash out problems that crop up etc. We meet and discuss matters much more regularly than the Ex-Co. The unfortunate thing is a very Senior Member who “self proclaims” to have been there from the beginning has cast petty, remarks that all the work being done is that of “sponsors” (including mine, mind you) and not the work of the OBA. Can you imagine Old Boys, let alone founder members mouthing this rubbish!. The very young Old Boy to whom this “snooty” remark was made had educated our “Senior” Pundit that what matters is we are all doing work to develop College. We had indicated originally that we would prefer not to accept office in the Ex-Co but would actively assist from outside. We still believe we should continue in the same way.

We have however followed a policy of reconciliation because both the College and the OBA are part of our lives and our heritage, not the “Nindagam” of a few individuals. A letter written by Mr. Leslie Habaragoda with some proposals was immediately tabled and placed before the Ex-Co. He was thanked for his interest etc and he was invited to discuss his proposals. A telephone call from Mr. Pilloo Lakdawela making a few suggestions informally were also placed before the very next Ex-Co Meeting and they are being acted upon. It would seem that the Head Master is perhaps going out of his way to make us feel frustrated, disenchanted so that we will stop all development work. Catering only to his needs is what he expects from us.

- B. Any Member of the OBA (including myself) is free to attend Meetings of the Ex-Co not only to place proposals but to observe the manner in which business is conducted in a very friendly and professional manner- it is not a meeting of 20 Minutes and an adjournment to the S.S.C for the next 2 ½ hrs. This can be verified from Members of the previous Ex-Co. In fact some Ex-Co Meetings go on with deliberations for over 3 hours. We have steadfastly maintained that the Ex-Co should keep their doors open for any interested Member. There is no point in appointing an Ex-Co in February of a year at Guru and the Membership trooping back to Guru One year hence to listen to a Secretary’s report, and digest Audited Accounts thrust upon you when you are trying to still get over all the alcohol you have consumed from 10.30 a.m until 3.30 p.m and waiting for the AGM to conclude so that by 9.00 p.m. you are having Fellowship again. During a period of 12 months the Membership abdicates its functions, interests and love for College and resurfaces 12 months later. All my friends agree with me that this is a big joke. As Guru is far away this lack of interest in its activities, lack of supervision, lack of management skills have brought about this sorry mess in College. It must have been so difficult for Dr. Hayman and others to build Guru. It has been effortless to destroy what they all sacrificed so much to build and create apart from moulding 100s of Old Boys of whom the whole country can be proud of. **It will not be easy to rebuild that edifice.** When one visits Guru today and when one sees and gets to know the students, the minor staff, the administrative staff, the tutorial staff and the head of the whole team, the Head Master, it is no wonder that so many people, even Members of previous Ex-Cos as well as those who go on the annual pilgrimage to Guru fore-warned us that it is a disaster area, it cannot be revived and we are wasting our time, energy and money. But we took up the challenge because we felt it can be done. **All we need is an Administrator in College and the blessings of the Bishop/ Board of Governors to make necessary arrangements which are very reasonable** as far as school fees etc are concerned. We have also high-lighted the fact that no person who is responsible is available during holidays on the Campus. It has now become very clear to most people that Administration of the College has to be left in the hands of either a Management Committee or a Chief Administrative Officer. Even Mt. Lavinia had advertised for such a person. So we hope to take this matter up in due course. We are hoping to identify an Old Boy with the necessary skills to take residence on

the Campus and be in charge of security, discipline, games, vehicles, purchasing and the maintenance and upkeep of the Campus and such matters leaving perhaps mostly tutorial and academic matters to the Head Master. The Head Master does not teach any subject or draw up the School Time Table, Prize List or Fill up any Form to be given to the Education Department etc, etc.

- C. **Despite the obstacles placed before us, we are prepared to work with the present Head Master and the present Bishop because we have the strength and we are quite confident we can uproot the evil and put College on a proper footing.** This has to be the foundation. Sending Books to the Library, gifting life saving equipment, buying basket balls may be just ornamental work and this is all we have been permitted to engage in. It is a waste of talent, time and opportunity. I am convinced that the powers that be, none of whom are Thomians, none of whom knew Dr.Hayman, Mrs.Hayman or Fr.Foster and others are quite content to let that branch of S.Thomas' eventually become a village school of the area catering to persons in that social back ground. A day will come when the OBA will be no more and the College as we know it will cease to exist. The signs are there. Remedial action is spurned. Goodwill shown is rejected.

I have summarised a few matters relating to the Head Master which is a fair insight to his nature. **It must also be said that the present Head Master has made some changes for the better** in comparison to the last one who was there only for two years. Yet totally inadequate to bring about the revival that is necessary to bring it back at least to some position which it had earlier. There is so much, you will realize that can easily be done, which will definitely make some reasonable change, but is not being done. This is our complaint.

1. When Mr. Alban Fernando the previous Head Master was about to hand over reins last September, we sought his permission to do our Report on Guru. He gave maximum co-operation to us. We interviewed him in College and also in Colombo. He invited us to go anywhere in College, meet any person, as we pleased. He had nothing to hide. **NOBODY HAD POISONED HIS MIND. HE DID NOT IDENTIFY HIMSELF WITH ANY SET OF OLD BOYS. WE WERE ABLE TO COMPLETE OUR WORK WITHOUT ANY HINDRANCE.** Thereafter the new Headmaster was installed. On the same day immediately thereafter, was the College Prize Giving at which the Bishop was the Chief Guest. Immediately after the Prize Giving two of the most Senior members of the staff who had heard of our activities during the last 3 days in College walked up to me and mentioned that they definitely needed to meet us that day itself. However, the Bishop's wife was keen on attending the funeral house of the Swimming Master who had drowned at Kirinda the previous day. One Senior Teacher had to accompany the Bishop's wife and our discussion did not materialize that day due to lack of time. But they requested that we come back in a day or two and meet up at College. That would have been the 2nd or 3rd day after the new Headmaster was installed. I

requested the teachers to get the necessary permission and clearance from the Headmaster. **HAVING GOT THE NECESSARY PERMISSION, THEY TELEPHONED ME TO NUWARA ELIYA WHERE I WAS STAYING AND CONFIRMED THAT THE FOLLOWING DAY AT 1.30 P.M. WOULD BE APPROPRIATE.** I left Nuwara Eliya at 12.30 p.m. As I parked the car near the College Hall the 2 teachers were waiting for me. We walked up towards the class rooms. The Headmaster was walking down from his bungalow and mentioned that he would like to speak to me. I asked him whether he could not wait till I finished with the teachers. He said he preferred to speak immediately. I knew immediately the Accountant had got to him. The tutorial staff and the Accounts Department have been having a running battle for sometime. The previous Headmaster had succumbed to the undue pressure from the Accounts Department and it had been the Accounts Department that ran the show. If you read our Report of October, 2001 we have given these facts in detail. Now the culprits were scared the teachers would spill the beans to me. So I asked the teachers to proceed and turned back with the Head Master. **WHEN I SAT IN THE HEADMASTER'S OFFICE, HE MENTIONED TO ME THAT HE WOULD PREFER IF I DO NOT MEET THOSE TEACHERS.** I asked him whether he had any special reason. He had none. I then told him that the teachers were waiting for me in the Staff Room of the Laboratory and that if I leave them without meeting them he would have to give excuses to them; it would look very strange indeed why I did an about -turn and the Teachers would be immediately prejudiced against the Headmaster for having prevented a dialogue. I said I was quite content to do his bidding but cautioned him that his course of action was ill advised and would back-fire on him. He then thought it better and allowed me to meet them. **BUT ONCE AGAIN HE REQUESTED ME TO MAKE IT SHORT.** The meeting went on for almost 3 hours. I did not inform them of the Headmaster's attempted intervention. Subsequent to our Report, the 2 culprits in the Accounts Department have got into a shell, do not meet us, talk to us or show their faces to us. All have got to know about this. Any way the Headmaster still has a fear of Old boys meeting his staff or the students etc. and I feel he tries to avoid it. The interesting thing is now the Head Master himself appears to have realized how corrupt the Senior Hands in the Accounts Department really are. **DESPITE THIS HISTORY WE HAVE NOT SHIED AWAY DISCOURAGED FROM TRYING TO HELP COLLEGE.**

2. The present Head Master was installed in office on September 10,2001. He was present at the School Prize Giving on the same day when Mr.Alban Fernando presided. The Chief Guest was the present Bishop of Colombo. On that occasion the vote of thanks was Proposed by Mr.Upali Jaywardena, the then Secretary of the OBA and Seconded by Master A S De Silva, the Head Prefect of the College. Mr.Panditharatne, the Manger of the College was also present.

3. The Head Master was not present at the subsequent Meetings of the Ex-Co of the OBA on September 27, October 09, November 28,2001 and January 24,and February 05,2002. He was however present and presided at the Meeting on February 21,2002 when inter alia it was resolved to issue cheques to various persons for work carried out on the New Dining Hall Project which was nearing completion, although the Bank Account of the OBA did not have the required funds. Minutes of 21.02.2002 are enclosed.

4. Also enclosed are letters dated January 25, January 30 and February 06,2002 addressed by Mr.Sarath Suraweera (and Mr.Rizvi Jalill) to Mr.Upali Jayawardena in connection with the fixing of the date and time of the AGM due in February, 2002. Also enclosed are the Minutes of 05.02.2002. The Head Master had apparently unilaterally fixed the mid-term holidays of the school. On that occasion the Head Master in a telephone conversation with our friend Mr.Jabir Junaid **ADMITTED THAT HE WAS UNAWARE THAT HE WAS THE PRESIDENT OF THE OBA** and that the AGM and the College Mid Term had to be fixed in consultation with the OBA to coincide with the AGM and Re-Union of the OBA. He also agreed to adjust the dates of the Mid-Term Holidays to fall in line with the new dates to be fixed for the AGM as Mr.Jabir Junaid undertook to reimburse any additional postage expenses of sending fresh circular letters to the parents. The Head Master later denied this **AND MR.PANDITHARATNE WHO PRESIDED MENTIONED OPENLY THAT THE HEAD MASTER HAD STATED HE WAS PREPARED TO GIVE THIS IN WRITING.**

5. The Head Master in his Report at the AGM on March 02,2002 stated as follows:- **“Recently there was a letter from the Old Boys accusing me for not being present at the Ex-Co Meeting and also deciding the AGM week end without their consent”**. I wish to state that I am guilty for both accusations and promise you that it will never ever happen in future. Hence, I would like to cite an example in this regard. Once a little boy was accused for stealing a cucumber. The Judge asked the little boy, “Is there anything that you have to say?. The little boy turned at the Judge and said “ Sir, haven’t you ever stolen a cucumber in your life?” The Judge dismissed the case.”

One would see from the correspondence that this assertion is strictly not correct in that no **“accusation”** was made although these close to him appear to have given that impression to him. We do not wish to comment on his example except to state that the **“MISDEMEANOURS”** are being repeated far too often for it to be as a result of **“IGNORANCE”** or **“ACCIDENTAL”**. A case of too many stolen cucumbers- so to say!!.

6. At the AGM on March 02,2002 when much interest was generated and there was tension in the air, the Head Master in his opening address admitted **that he was also excited.** In fact, he was highly tensed because the previous Ex-Co and their friends had primed him. The Head Master is reported to have

mentioned to Members of the tutorial staff that some rowdies had come in a bus for the AGM and that they were only interested in casting a vote at an election. This was a pointed reference to the friends of the brother of Mr.Rizvi Jalill who came by special bus from Colombo to support our efforts to replace the Ex-Co. In fact it is well known that the arrival of the bus completely demoralized disoriented and dejected the old Ex-Co and their supporters. Mr.Prabath Jayasundera at the initial stages of the AGM spoke a few words and wished to express a point of view. Mr.Kamal Nilaweera objected to same and the Head Master was quick to rule him out order. **The tone and manner in which the Head Master orderd Mr.Prabath Jayasundera.** a former Head Prefect of the College who commands immense respect, loyalty and support from hundreds of Old Boys of his vintage to sit down was in very poor taste and not a request to an Old Boy from the Head Master at an AGM but sounded like an order to a 7 or 8 year old student who was being put in his place by the Head Master for having played truant. It indicated his venom against the person who was responsible for ensuring the participation of large numbers of Old Boys at that AGM. All these actions are an indication and manifestation of the Head Master's animosity etc, against those who were trying to replace the Old Ex-Co.

7. At the Ex-Co Meeting on May 17,2002 the Head Master submitted his Report which was tabled. He adverted to his van which could not be used as the engine needed replacement. As the OBA did not have any funds. whatsoever this was deferred. Thereafter his friends inquired whether the Ex-Co could put up 50% of the cost of a 2nd hand or reconditioned engine as they could put up the balance. This proposal was not transmitted to the Ex-Co officially. As there was no response they had purchased the engine and had the van repaired.
8. At the Ex-Co Meeting on June 15,2002 the Head Master submitted his Report which was tabled. A perusal of that indicates the prominence he has given to his friends of the previous Ex-Co and their financiers who purchased the re-conditioned engine for his Van in College for Rs.85,000/- or so as against the Rs.1.5 Million or so expended by Mr.Mahipala for the repair of the senior dormitories. We all heard and saw the Head Master requesting Mr.Shervon Fernando, the Hony.Secretry to ensure that all the names of his friends were mentioned in the Minutes also. Even in his Prize Day Speech the Head Master made an emphatic reference to the repair of his van and proceeded to name these persons individually.
9. The background set out herein before helps us to have a better overview of the Head Master. His fondness for those of the previous Ex-Co and his innate suspicions and perhaps dislike or preference to work with the previous Ex-Co.

10. At the 1st meeting of the Ex-Co on April 08, the Senior Vice President suggested that the practice of declaring mid-term holidays to coincide with the OBA AGM and Re-union be stopped; that the students be requested to have an Art and Science Exhibition etc. to promote inter-action between students, staff and Old Boys. This is something we proposed last year. The Headmaster did not appear to be keen and said he will put it to his staff and revert at the next Meeting of the Ex-Co. At the Ex-Co Meeting of May 17, the Senior Vice President was not present as he was abroad. The Headmaster presided as usual but did not advert to this matter. We were present by invitation. We let it pass. At the Ex-Co Meeting on June 15, 2002 a friend Mr.Jabir Junaid and I were present by invitation. The Headmaster did not make any reference to this subject. I took it upon myself to inquire from the Headmaster what the result of his discussion with his staff had been. **He then said that the staff agreed with him that the present practice be continued for at least one more year. In another one year this Ex-Co will be out. Perhaps his friends will come back.** There was never a request for greater inter action with Students by that Ex-Co. They belong to the “Guru Picnic Club”. Subsequently, I checked on this in an indirect manner. I came to know that Staff Meetings were only occasions for the Head Master to make known notices, announcements, appointments etc. but not for open discussion or expression of views, ideas, proposals and suggestions - rather like a school assembly for students. I came to know that the Head Master had only expressed his views on the matter, not sought the views and encouraged an open discussion. You will agree that this is not what is expected. **So there ended the interaction that was sought.**
11. On my own and at my expense having sought the Head Masters permission we converted the Ex-Co meeting etc. of June 15' 2002 at Guru into an Event filled weekend. We arranged a swimming and Life Saving Display and an exhibition after having won over the new Life Saving Coach by purchasing with him in Colombo at my expense all the equipment etc. he wished to have. There has been no Life Saving since the departure of Dr. Hayman. We arranged the donation of equipment through all Old Boys who were present that morning at the Swimming Pool (on the morning of June 15.) We also arranged a Health Camp where 2 Dental Surgeons and 4 other Doctors saw the entire resident population of College, i.e students, staff and minor staff and their families on the morning of June 15 and gave them medical attention and advice. I also arranged 2 Disc Jockeys to travel to College from Colombo and provide music that the students appreciate in the evening of June 14 in the College Hall to which everybody was invited. The students really let themselves go. Although a special dinner which I tried to organise from Bandarawela for the students did not work out, the 3 or 4 Old Boys who were present with me had the greatest satisfaction of seeing how happy those students were for what we gave them. As far as I am concerned the happiness I derived from seeing almost 300 students aged 5 yrs. to 16 years enjoying themselves that evening gives me sufficient satisfaction to know that what is

required for the students at Guru apart from their studies, sports etc. is caring love, kindness and understanding. Nobody is bothered about them. We the Old Boys can do so much for them, instead of visiting Guru for an Annual Picnic. So the interaction which was deprived to the OBA during the A.G.M. and Re-union week-end was indirectly achieved by me during the Ex-Co week end (although the number of Old Boys participating was negligible). We reiterate that what is required is to handle the Head Master properly. We should not have a bogey or phobia about having a discussion with the Head Master or to make suggestions to him. If he is handled properly perhaps on a one-to-one basis, or by very Senior Members he will come right. One point to be noted however is that although the Staff, Minor Staff, and Students were quite happy about the events, the Head Master was not pleased at all. It did appear as if we had stolen a march on him, and we had managed to win friends in College which did not please him.

12. Brig. Bandula Munasinghe arranged to procure monthly consignments of books from Asia Foundation. He suggested that the Head Master indicate some convenient date when he could be in Colombo to attend their office and make a formal ceremonial acceptance. **Though requested, this appointment could never be made with the Head Master, to date.**
13. Having come to know that the library was not adequately stocked and books were required, we asked for details of the nature of books and periodicals repeatedly by telephone and letter. There was no response. Brig. Munasinghe procured the 1st consignment of books from Asia Foundation. Mr. Don Gazara brought in books from U.K. They were taken to Guru by us. We arranged to make a formal presentation after the Ex-Co Meeting. **Before this could be done, the Head Master made an announcement that the books were very good but about 85% of them were beyond the standard of the Students, and hence useless.** The opinion expressed as well as the tone in which he made it speaks volumes not only of the Head Master but also of the product of the school. Need I say how frustrated we felt and how hurt the actual donors would feel.
14. We were informed that desks and chairs were required for the class rooms. We requested that we be furnished with details, how many class rooms and how many desks and chairs per class room. We could not get this information for over 6 months and to date. We donated 30 Desks and chairs of our own for 02 class rooms. At the last Ex-Co meeting at Guru the Head Master on related discussions behaved in a very improper manner, “ I want six more chairs please any one- any one- Just 06 more chairs- will any body give this” until in sheer embarrassment 03 members of the Ex-Co “volunteered” to donate his requirement. **We feel he should not conduct himself in this manner.**

15. In order to install a new telephone system, we required distances measured in order to order the wiring for the extensions from the laboratory and class rooms at one end and Keble at the other end. **We could not get this information for over 6 months and to date.**
16. We were told that various equipment for the Laboratory were required. We asked for a list and could not get it for months. One item was a microscope. We asked for specifications. **Todate we haven't got it.**
17. We inquired whether the Books of Accounts were being written up and Bank reconciliations were being done monthly. The question was posed at an Ex-Co Meeting. **The Head Master said he knew nothing about it.**
18. We were told that College could afford to give books only for winners of the Form Prize and not the subject prize and hence over a 100 prize winners only received a Certificate. We asked for the prize list and what type of books in English and Sinhala were required. We could not get this information for well over 3 months. Eventually we had to visit the residence of a Master in Nuwara-Eliya and collect it. We had decided to purchase these books with the help of 2 Masters but because of the Head Master's attitude toward us, we changed our mind. The list was given to the Secretary and he was requested to ask the Senior Vice President as to what should be done. The Senior Vice President requested him to get some relevant information from the Head Master. **The information did not come.**
19. The Senior Vice President suggested that a profile of the Headmaster be given prominence in the 1st Newsletter of the OBA. We asked him for it. It never came. It still has not come. The 1st Newsletter has gone. The 2nd has also gone. **The profile has not been sent.**
20. A 3 ½ page note on College was prepared and sent to College so that certain blanks could be filled up to be incorporated in the Newsletter. This was posted and faxed many times. Numerous telephone calls did not bring results. Eventually, it was completed by us through a telephone conversation but the facts and figures given are obviously wrong arithmetically and hence had to be completely redone with approximate figures. We have felt over and over again that it is not possible to get the assistance of the Head Master and his staff, for our Development Activities. We have eventually written him a letter and put the ball in his court for him to revert when he pleases. There is a limit to letters, reminders, faxes and telephone calls. It has become embarrassing.
21. The College History Books were lying idle in College. We requested that the books be given to us for sale. It has taken umpteen telephone calls and personal requests to get down the books. **Eventually, we brought them back personally.** We sold almost 1/3 of the entire stock within 2 weeks.

22. The Headmaster requested the Accounts Department to release the History Books to me. He sent several messages. Finally the peon came back after going up and down several times and the Head Master had to walk in to the Accounts Department to find out what the problem was. Thereafter he returned and requested his Secretary to do a letter without which the Accountant would not release them. He was not in a position to summon the Accountant to his room and give a direct order. **The Accountant proved that he could get the Headmaster to come to him.**
23. Persons leaving the Campus do not undergo a search of their baggage. Every part of the boundary is an exit point. So many avoid the main entrance gate. The Head master has a security point on the lawn of his bungalow from where the security has a good view of the road passing by. We saw an employee attached to the kitchen/pantry leaving after his shift ended at 2.00 p.m carrying a huge bag completely filled up, passing the security post unchecked and unhampered and on his way out of the Campus through one of the unofficial exits. **The Head Master has not been able to stop this and make the change.**
24. There are so many paths and exits out of the Campus. These have been pointed out. No efforts have been made to prevent students and minor staff from exiting through those paths. One cannot say the Head Master is unaware of this. **A fence alone will not stop this. The rule must be introduced. This is not being done.**
25. The food served for the students is best unmentioned. We have partaken of it and we are ashamed that College has come to that level. Suffice it is to mention that students even in the Junior Dorms, i.e from year 6 upwards, i.e aged 10-11 years upwards, are eating raw Maggi Noodles in their dorms, to sustain themselves. These packets, cartons and boxes are brought in bulk by the students when they come home after holidays, during mid-term and during week-ends. They are also freely available and heavily stocked in the Co-op stores and in the Canteen. These facts are common knowledge. **I discussed this with the Head Master. He agreed with me. But he asked me “Do you know I also eat that food”.**
26. Students are allowed to go home as and when they please, on week-ends, mid-week etc. It is the Head Master’s Secretary who appears to be handling this responsible task. **There must be some control of leave.**
27. Parents are found loitering around all over the dorms, in Keble, in Junior Dorms and elsewhere. Visitors rooms though available have not been arranged though requested even in our Report of October 2001. **Parents entry to Dorms and other Student areas should be stopped. Parents are not going to misunderstand these rules.**

28. The Games period has not been made compulsory. Games have been a part of the education and life at Guru. We have referred to this in our Report of October 2001. Students are found outside College premises on the public road freely walking around at that time. They are not pulled up. Security sees them and they are ignored. They feel the Head Master will not act. **They do not wish to pull up for the sake of doing so.**
29. The short-cuts students had been using from near the Swimming Pool/Filtering Plant behind the Dining hall, vegetable plots, wells and up to the old class room block was referred to at an Ex- Co Meeting. The Head Master informed the Ex-Co that he had made it out of bounds again and students were now obeying his edict. Weeks after that we found hoards of students happily using the short-cut without any hindrance. The Head Masters Report to the Ex-Co was not factually correct. **He seems quite sure the Ex-Co will not find fault with him, not wanting a confrontation . In other words he knows the vulnerableness of the current Ex-Co. He is sure he is indisposible and he has a friend on the Board- the Manager, who they say found him the job, whereas the Ex-Co and the OBA are deprived of a true representative on the Board.**
30. The teaching of English in years 4,& 5 in the Primary School has been commented upon ad nauseam. Everybody including the Headmaster knows that the teacher is incompetent. It is a Sinhala teacher who is taking English for years 4-5 simply because she is the Supervisor of the Primary Section and has been in employment for 26 years or so. The teaching is so bad that parents have openly said “remove her from English teaching in years 4 & 5 and we will send out children to the Primary Section of STCG”. The worse indictment is that the teacher of English of year 1,2 & 3 is required by the School to give extra classes after school hours in English language to years 4 & 5 who are supposed to be taught English Language by the Supervisor of that Section, during normal School periods. I mentioned this to the Head Master he agreed with me. He does not wish to hurt the feelings of the Supervisor. Thus new entrants to College shy away. **The former Bishop too did not wish to remove a Manager as he was the Bishop’s friend.**
31. Children are permitted to enter the Swimming Pool in all types of clothing. There is no insistence on proper bathing trunks. Ordinary shorts, long shorts, and every type and style of clothing is used. With the result the swimmers at the pool are not like students at the STCG pool but bathers who have come to picnic at Bopath Ella. We observed this and discussed it with the new Swimming/Life saving coach. He had taken it upon himself to advise the students in this regard. **The Headmaster ignores this.**
32. Having participated in the donation and presentation of Swimming Pool equipment and Life saving Gear in the morning of June 15, proceeded together with a friend or two accompanied by the Head Master through the

junior dorms quadrangle. Students were happily playing running across the quadrangle. “I asked the Headmaster is this the normal form”. He immediately spoke to the students thus, “Here, here son, you can’t go over the grass. Please keep out”. Moments later 2 senior students cut across the quadrangle diagonally and the Head Master did not need any prompting to repeat. “Here, here son, you are not supposed to go this way. Go back the way you came.” And as an aside to me he mentioned that they were Senior Students. In fact they had no business to be anywhere around that area. The Senior students however paid no attention and continued to complete their journey unfazed by the Head Master’s shouts of “Son”. Thereafter he spotted the Junior Dorm Superintendent standing just there and said to him **“Elle (short for Ellepola), don’t allow these boys to go this way- other wise Mr.Lakshman Jayatilaka will find fault with me”** This means **if not for Mr.Lakshman Jayatilaka the rule will be observed in the breach without any objection from the Head Master. I have suffered this type of digs from the Head Master for a long time. Some of them have been during Meeting of the Ex-Co and some outside, always in the presence of so many others. I am not affected. My interests have been in College.**

33. Dorm Masters have not been assigned in close proximity to the dorms they should supervise. There is no point having a dorm master residing at the other end of the Campus and giving him a title.
34. A dorm master on receipt of a complaint had entered a Senior Dorm in the night during Room Time to look in to the matter. On his entry a student, the prospective Head prefect (to be appointed in January 2002) had in a very intimidating manner inquired from him “Mokada Thamuse Aawe. Wedak nattan yanawa, yanna puluwan Apu Peththatama”. That student apparently is still in College. The matter had been reported by the Dorm Master to the Head Master and we were told that the Headmaster had indicated to the Dorm Master that it was a trivial incident and not worth quarrelling about and requested the student to apologise. **The Head Master must enforce discipline.**
35. Some senior students had been on the roof of some unoccupied staff quarters in the Keble area and on being requested by security staff to get down had turned violent and with a heavy stick beaten the security guard unmercifully to such an extent and either injured or broken the security guard’s hand. These students too had continued in College. On the Security guard’s complaint being lodged with the Headmaster his response had been to ask the Security Guard not to make a big issue out of it but accept the apology of the student.
36. The last 2 incidents are common knowledge in College, outside and in the area. This has resulted in outsiders getting a very poor picture of the Headmaster as a disciplinarian. It is a fact that the students and minor staff have both been very indisciplined in the recent past. The impression all on the

campus have is that the Headmaster is very lenient towards the senior students and the minor staff. Perhaps he is in fear of them and prefers to play safe. **He can turn to the OBA for proper guidance in those matters. He should not spurn away help offered.**

37. In fact perhaps to curry favour with the minor staff he has permitted them to cultivate vegetables in the College Garden for 1 year, so that they may sell the produce and keep the proceeds. From the 2nd year, they are expected to give to College 25% of the sale proceeds. Now this is a very dangerous trend. Apart from the fact that implementation will be very difficult, in giving these concessions to the minor staff to curry favour with them or get them on to his side and less volatile he may not have realized that in a situation the Labour Department and their Trade Union will generally consider this benefit as a term and condition of their employment which once given may not be possible to withdraw. The Head Master will not be able to provide a good defense for this.
38. In December 2001, the students sitting for the GCE (O/L) exam remained in their dorms after school holidays were given. Some had broken the padlocks and door of an adjoining dorm, broken the padlocks and locks of cupboards in which students had left their clothes and stolen some shirts and other clothing. The member of the minor staff whose responsibility it was had reported the matter. The Head Master had appeared on the scene and at a discussion with the Superintendent of the Senior Dorms agreed that the matter should not be disclosed to the Manager, Mr.Upali Panditharatne who was due in College the following day and so the pact was sealed. We were in College during these days attending to the painting and refurbishment of the Junior Dorms and became aware of the above. **The Head Master should not have kept this from the Manager and covered up.**
39. On Christmas Eve some Christian students have jumped out of the Senior Dorms and gone to Welimada to church. They had returned before morning. The Head Master had been informed. He had preferred to ignore this because anyway those students who were sitting the O'Levels exams were not coming back to College.
40. The Food Matron does not retain physical custody of the keys. Minor staff employees in the kitchen and pantry are making hay while the sun shines. We had referred to this in our Report of October, 2001. The practice goes on unhampered. **The Head Master should definitely be aware of this practice, but does nothing to stop it.**
41. In early June we visited the College and inspected the new roof of the senior dorms done by a member of the Group. When we were attending to the Junior Dorm the Head Master told us that it was the senior dorms that were in urgent need of repairs and that the Board of Governors had approved the repair of the

roof of one senior dorm only, due to lack of funds and the balance repairs were to be spread out perhaps over 3 or 4 school holidays. This would have meant at least another 1 year. Our friend repaired the entire Senior dorms with almost a new roof right through within less than 2 months (including the Sinhala new year period during which workmen were not available). In June whilst the finishing touches were going on, we discovered the roofing sheets were not overlapping each other properly. In other words as usual somebody down the line was making a quick buck at our friend's expense. We did not wish to speak to the workman because it would have been interpreted wrongly. Instead we inquired from the Superintendent of the Senior Dorms whether he had noticed this defect. He informed me that he had and he had also pointed it out to the Head Master who had opined; "this is a job being done by an Old Boy. We are getting it free. So we should not find fault". Surely the Head Master should have known that the Old boy was unaware of the bad workmanship. We indicated to the Superintendent that he should tell the Head Master that students will have to shift their beds when it rains. The same day the workmen were spoken to and they agreed that they would have to remove it and redo the roofing sheets. The Head Master should have acted in a more responsible way. **The Staff feel he takes the easy way out in any situation.**

42. One of our friends Mr.Rizvi Jalill who visited the College in June observed that the pool had not been cleaned, the garden had not been swept and that there was a general state of neglect. My friend who is quite free with the Head Master indicated to him that no Old boy would be willing to give any further assistance to College if that is the way the Campus is cared for. Immediately the Head Master promised to have it attended within 2 days, and it was in fact done. **The Head Master should not need some one to prod him to action.**
43. There are almost 50 minor employees on the staff. Most of them are idling during working hours. The garden in front of the senior dorms was in a serious state of neglect. Another friend of our Mr.Sujeewa Godage, a Planter brought one workman who in one day cleaned up the entire garden in front of the Senior Dorms and pruned the trees, cut the hedges and did the landscaping in such a way that after the Ex-Co Meeting on June 15, all commented how neat the place was. Having almost 50 employees it is not possible for College to do this. **Labour available is not being utilized.**
44. The area immediately outside the new dining hall was cleaned up for the ceremonial opening on March 02,2002. By end of May, the grass had overgrown and was knee high. A friend of our Mr.Rizvi Jalill again playfully had inquired from the Headmaster whether there weren't any serpents lurking around and why he would not get it cleaned up. There after it was done in one day.

45. Scouting has been resumed and the Scout Master had asked for a room to keep the paraphernalia and call it the Scout Room. Almost 50% of staff quarters etc, are vacant and unoccupied. Handing over a room for scouting had not been done up to mid June. The boys doing scouting attend in all types of clothing, very casual and in slippers. There is no insistence of proper uniform. **This seems to be reserved only for formal occasions.**
46. Broken furniture which can be repaired are stacked up in various rooms all over the Campus. These includes tables, chairs, lockers and beds. No effort has been made to have them sent to the carpentry shed and cannibalized or repaired. These are slowly taken out of the campus from time to time. The Head Master prefers to place the order with Old Boys and get a new stock. But he is unable to say how many he needs.
47. In order to do an assessment of the school the format of a profile was handed over. We volunteered to spend 2 to 3 days on the Campus and have this attended. We were told it could be done without our help. Out of 413 students, the profile was completed by only 330 students. Out of 107 employees of the college, 12 did not complete the profile. The results of our studies and an analysis of the Profiles does throw some light on the current situation. It is a far cry from 1962, i.e Dr.Hayman's last completed year. We are sure when you go through the social background etc, you will see how selective college had been in admitting students. **It cannot be gainsaid that what is provided for in Guru has to be appreciated by students from a certain social background. To expect otherwise would be unwise. This is what has happened over the years and nobody is interested in correcting this.**
48. The current Secretary to the Head Master was imported by the previous Head Master who was working in Parliament. The Secretary too had been in Parliament. The term of that Head master ended in September 2001. His Secretary was supposed to be a spy for the Accounts Dept. The Secretary's term of office was due to end in December 2001. We mentioned to the Bishop and it is referred to in our Report that his contract should not be renewed so that the new Headmaster is burdened with another headache. The New Head Master should have been free to select his Secretary who would handle all his confidential work. But nobody bothered. The Secretary's contract has been renewed. He is now the Secretary to the New Headmaster. He continues to spy and be thoroughly inefficient as far as we are concerned. There is absolutely no co-operation from him as far as the OBA is concerned.
49. We had strongly recommended against employing relatives of employees. We had analysed and pointed out in our Report that over 20% of employees were relations. We even discussed this with the Bishop who did not approve of this pernicious practice. In fact this matter has been referred to at Meetings of the Ex-Cos, AGM's before our time. Apart from the Husband and Wife even the children are given employment. **The Head Master continues the practice.**

50. We asked for information relating to the last few years of the number of students on the Roll; the number of students who left school; the number of students who joined school; and the number of day boys and boarders. Over 6 months have gone and the Head Master's Secretary is sitting on it. **We have no way of getting all this information. So we have given up.**
51. We find that since 1996 the lowest on the Roll of students is in 2002 ie. 413.
52. The Headmaster said at a Meeting of the Ex-Co on April 08,2002 that he wishes to have 700 students on the Roll. He knows jolly well we have been consistently cautioning against adhoc increasing and to do a complete study before determining the optimum number appropriate for College. On June 15,2002 he drops the desired figure to 550. At the moment he has only 413. He cannot make up his mind. This is a case of bad management. Neither he nor his Accountant is really competent to decide on it.
53. The Headmaster's bungalow is perhaps the only building in College which is presentable. When one of our friends had inquired what are the most urgent matters that should be attended to on a priority basis, the Head Master's response has been "don't tell anybody, but my bungalow is badly in need of repairs". We were stupefied. On one of our visits in June when we walked up to the Headmaster's Bungalow to inform him of our presence, we observed that he was getting masons whom my friend who was attending to the Senior Dorms had assigned work being utilized by the Headmaster to do certain minor repairs in his bungalow.
54. At an Ex-Co Meeting it was suggested that steps be taken to instal a Police post in close proximity to College. It was agreed that the Headmaster would give a letter addressed to the Minister of Internal Security which Brig. Bandula Munasinghe as Co-ordinating Secretary to the Minister of Defence would take in hand and pursue. The letter was prepared and sent to him for signature and return, to enable us to hand over to Brig. Bandula Munasinghe. Since there was some delay, we wondered why. The Headmaster had signed the letter and sent it direct to the Minister of Internal Security. The letter perhaps is in some dustbin somewhere. Now we have re-done the letter and we are awaiting to get his signature and retrieve the letter immediately.
55. **When we asked the Headmaster whether there was a Computer Master he answered in the affirmative.** On a subsequent occasion when the matter was raised he admitted that it was the Accountant he was referring to and that he was paid an allowance of Rs. 3,000/- extra. We are aware that 2 Computers are kept in a room near the Headmaster's Office. The keys are kept by the Accountant. When afternoon tea is over, students collect the keys from the Accountant, open the door of the Computer Room, use the Computers during games period and return the key to the Accountant before

going for their baths and evening Prep. So that is the IT Class. **The true picture is not being disclosed. This is not fair by the Ex-Co or the OBA.**

56. In order to appease a friend of mine, (after the Head Master had been found guilty of uttering a serious falsehood relating to the conversations he had with him re last AGM date) he invited my friend to be the Chief Guest at the Sports Meet. My friend had inquired whether the Head Master was serious to which the latter had responded in the affirmative and so my friend had accepted the invitation with thanks. My friend had been a good sportsman and an athlete of no mean repute. He had previously also been invited to be the Chief Guest in the Upper School Sports Meet at Mount. At the Meeting of the Ex-Co on June 15, when I suggested to the Head Master that the College show its appreciation to Mr.Mahipala in some way, considering the Rs.1.5 Million (approx) spent by him he indicated he would be sending a letter to Mr. Mahipala. Most of us were amused. I inquired from the Head Master whether there was no better way to do this because as far as we knew Mr.Mahipala's contribution was unique. He then said as he had already invited an Army Officer to be the Chief Guest at this year's sports meet, he could invite Mr.Mahipala to be the Chief Guest the following year i.e 2003. All of us looked at the head Master aghast. Appreciation delayed so long is as good as no appreciation. We could not believe what we had heard. In the meantime my friend who had been invited as Chief Guest for the Sports Meet looked flabbergasted and learnt for the first time the invitation extended to him was "frivolous". Are we not to take seriously anything the Head Master says.
57. At the Ex-Co Meeting on June 15,2002 the Head Master said "I want to tell you a secret. Please don't tell anybody. We have got Rs.1 Million from the sale of trees and we will use this money to settle the overdraft and interest etc." When the Head Master met me at my residence on July 13,2002 he confirmed that the sale proceeds would be applied to settle the overdraft and interest. In his Prize Giving Speech he mentioned the sum realized not realizing he was disclosing his own secret in public and stated that the money will be utilized "towards the education of the students".
58. The Head Master has been informed that "Thushara Traders" of Welimada owned by an Old Boy of the College have agreed to supply all the groceries required by the College at a price that none can match and would be delivered at his door step either on the basis of a regular order or the order to be placed on the telephone for the convenience of College. Presently, the College van goes to Keppetipola, Welimada, Bandarawela and various other places looking for items and in addition has been purchasing groceries from certain business establishments in Welimada where the transactions have been questionable. We have reported this in our Confidential Report. It has been pointed out even though purchases are made in bulk the prices paid are retail prices. Despite Mr.Rizvi Jalill having repeatedly requested the Head Master to try out this Old Boy's business establishment, purchases continue to be made

with the establishments in Welimada etc, with whom the Accounts Department culprits have been dealing over the years. This pernicious practice has not been suspended. We have ourselves referred to this in writing in correspondence with the Head Master and in the Summary of our Report which we made available to him.

59. The Ex-Co meeting of June 15, 2002 went off very well. Immediately after lunch, everybody was quite pleased and I took the opportunity to speak to the Headmaster personally. In the course of the discussion he mentioned various matters. It was quite clear to me that the Headmaster is badly in need perhaps in urgent need, of advice legal and otherwise, which he has not been directed or advised to obtain from those competent to offer it. **He referred to an employee who owes the College over Rs.100,000/- and who continues to occupy same quarters though his contract has ended. He has not referred this matter to us. How many other problems must he be hiding.** Surely we can help if he comes clean where it was obvious he needs guidance. I strongly feel that these ad-hoc street corner meetings should not be the procedure for the Headmaster to be provided with proper guidance.
60. The Ex-Co Meeting on July 19, commenced at 5.45 pm and went on till 9.30 p.m. The Head Master was not present on the basis that he was busy making arrangements for the Prize Giving fixed for July 22. We understand however that he was in fact in Colombo, come to take his wife for the Prize Giving. Most of the arrangements for the Prize Giving are made by the Senior Tutorial Staff. A good part of the business of the day was confined to matters on which the Head Master had to revert after the previous Meeting on June 15th. Mr.Don Gazara exploded as to how the Head Master whilst having in his hands the draft Minutes of the last Meeting more than 3 weeks ago with **matters relating to him high-lighted for easy reference** did not care to send a note with regard to his inability to be present and the courtesy to give a feed-back for the other Members to proceed with their deliberations knowing that he could not be present. Sometimes all of us may not be able to stomach the unfairness of it all. Why we Old Boys are so concerned when the person who should be the main beneficiary is treating our efforts in this cavalier way surprises us. Right throughout the Meeting from all matters that cropped up, it became very clear that the Head Master is “out of his depth”. However all are reconciled to accept that it is not easy to find a Head Master for Guru, that the present Head Master had come to stay, that the current Ex-Co would not embark on any activity so as to compromise the position of the Head Master or embarrass him and that we should as far as possible work in harmony with the Head Master and the Board of Governors. Some Old Boys with whom I have shared my knowledge and experiences of the last year or so strongly feel we must take much more positive action if our work is to show results. We have on the other hand acted with great restraint and patience. Nobody can say we have been hasty. So the position is that the work of the OBA is stalled because the Head Master is too slow. Almost every matter that came up

showed that our activities are being stalled and hampered by his nature. The question arises whether this is accidental owing to the nature of the man or sheer cussedness and deliberate delaying tactics etc.

61. The Headmaster saw me at my residence in Colombo on July 13 2002. He was trying to get a certified copy of the Deed by which Mr. Leslie de Saram had gifted the property at Gurutalawa to the S. Thomas' College – Board of Governors. He was spending Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday in Colombo to do this. I told him that had he given me a telephone call and given me the Deed particulars, I could have helped him out instead of his trip to Colombo which had been solely for this purpose. It is clear that what the Headmaster needs is a real friend or a person with administrative skills to share his burden or a Committee to advise him on management. **The earlier this is put in place the better it would be for the Headmaster and the College.**
62. We are convinced that what the Headmaster really needs is some sympathetic understanding. Those that made decisions in the last Ex-Co meetings and those who propped up that Ex-Co financially and those of previous Ex-Co's who were side-kicks are a bad influence on the present Headmaster, in that they do not permit a free and fair exchange of views or open discussion with other Old Boys particularly with the current Ex-Co. But then the Head Master must maintain his position and independence Yet again he may owe a lot to his benefactors and to the Manger who was also the Chief Executive Officer (De facto) of the last Ex-Co who was ousted. They are against new ideas and wish College to proceed on the same road. We saw disaster staring in the face. We recognized certain short-comings which can be rectified without much effort. We pointed out the short-term and long-term strategies. We were prepared to make a commitment of our time, energy, finances and good-will. Through the OBA and well-wishers, we were trying to harness all the available resources. In this endeavour we offered our hand of friendship to everybody including those of the previous Ex-Co who had previously shut their doors to us when they were in office. We will only try to do what we are permitted to do. When we feel our presence is unwelcome, we are sensitive enough to back-off. At that stage, we will try to get the Members of the current Ex-Co to do what we feel is necessary. If such efforts fail we give up. We have no hard feelings. From the inception we made it very clear we do not seek office. Our principles have not changed.
63. The present Head Master's term must be 2-4 years or so. Short of asking the Head Master the OBA has no record thereof. He has his good points and weak points. Almost all his weak points are those that can be corrected by giving proper support from a mature Ex-Co. An Ex-Co that has been removed and working behind the scenes in a vindictive manner is a disadvantage to the current Ex-Co, OBA, Head Master and the College. But it can be overcome. As regards major policy decisions it is necessary to have serious discussions

with the Head Master. The participation of all interested Old Boys in those discussions is to be desired, whatever their seniority may be. So far with regard to this all important aspect of the future of College, and future generations of Guru Thomions has not even been touched upon. That is our biggest regret. According to the data we have not a single Old Boy of Guru who has left during 1992-2001 appears to have joined the OBA. The student profile compiled by us from data made available in June 2002 gives some idea. If it is difficult to pick on 2 or 3 Old Boys of Guru to join you in your Company Firm, Office, Project, Profession or even sit at table and have a meal or a drink then we can safely conclude that Guru as we knew it has ceased to exist. **This in a nutshell is what we were trying and are trying and trying hard to change.** If this is not possible, then our effort is in vain. When one looks at the current tutorial staff and students the impression you get is unmistakably tragic. If the view of the majority is that the river is flowing and you can't alter its course, then we might as well all admit that there is not much we as Old Boys can contribute towards both College and the OBA and confine all our activities to Fellowship amongst our own friends and a casual trip (even annual) to Guru somewhat like how we would visit Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa or other ruined cities. As I see it, it is the OBA and its Ex-Co that should work with the Head Master in such a manner as to rebuild College. This can be done if the OBA and the Ex-Co can identify the priorities and the goals. **We cannot blow hot and cold.** Both parties must also be genuine in their intention. This sadly cannot be said of the Head Master.

64. Inviting the Ex-Co for the Prize Giving is a tradition. Other Old boys are also traditionally welcome. No invitation is necessary. In fact we mentioned this in the last Newsletter. At the last Meeting of the Ex-Co on July 19th the Head Master was not present. It was found that the Head Master had not co-ordinated with the Ex-Co as regards proposing the vote of thanks etc which is usually done by an Old Boy. One would imagine that the College Prize Giving, being the most important event in the College Calendar, and an Old Boy being involved, at least courtesy demanded his reference or at the very least an intimation to the OBA Ex-Co. We must not forget that he is the president of the OBA. To act unilaterally leaving the OBA in the dark to my mind, what ever strict tradition demands, may be inappropriate. The Ex-Co too had defaulted in this regard. Mr.Duleep Kumar inquired from several including me whether I was going. Earlier we had all arranged to go up and attend to various other development matters also. But then we found that the Head Master had invited the **PREVIOUS EX-CO** or a part thereof who are the "kitchen cabinet" even now. In that situation, we felt awkward to go up and I informed Mr.Duleep Kumar that I would not be going up (as in fact I had not been invited) . As Mr.Sunil Watawala was to go up, he was requested to propose the vote of thanks. This again was not conveyed to the Head Master by phone by the Ex-Co or on its behalf. The Prize Giving was to start at 10.00 a.m. We had arranged to have a News Item on most Radio Stations

from 1.00 p.m onwards. At 12 noon when we phoned Guru to check who had actually proposed and seconded the vote of thanks, to finalise the News Item, which we had prepared, we found that one member of the previous Ex-Co had been given the honour in preference to Mr.Sunil Watawala. It had been seconded by a Senior Student not the Head Prefect because none had been appointed so far! Mr.Sunil Watawala, who Dr.Hayman said was his best Head Prefect is presently a Vice President of the current Ex-Co. He could not fulfill the task assigned by the Ex-Co. Later on, in the afternoon Mr.Suresh Thiyagarajah the Assistant Secretary of the Ex-Co phoned the Head Master to check how the Prize Giving had gone and whether his team of Video Cameramen who were detailed to cover the Prize Giving to do a P.R job on College had left etc. He had also inquired how Mr.Sunil Watawala's speech had been. The Head Master had said he had not invited Mr.Sunil Watawala to speak. That it was absolutely his discretion to call up any Old Boy he wishes. **He had been quite firm about this assertion.** So he does not respect or recognize the OBA or its Ex-Co in dealing with matters relating to Old Boys and concerning the most formal event in the School Calendar of the year. Obviously he has got his facts checked with Mr Upali Jayawardena the former Secretary as well as Mr.Upali Panditharatne, a former Vice President and current Manager of the School who have been present at Guru from Sunday evening together with Mr.Srilal Wickreematne of the previous Ex-Co all of whom had been invited by him and were his guests at his bungalow from Sunday Evening. It was Mr.Upali Jayawardena who proposed the Vote of Thanks to Bishop Duleep who was the Chief Guest at the last Prize Giving in September 2001. After the Ex-Co Meeting on June 15 at Guru when Mr.Duleep Kumar suggested at about 4.00 p.m that we retire to his bungalow for tea the Head Master ignored his request and made his way with the members of the Ex-Co to the Dining Hall.

L.J
Colombo
July 26,2002